

Request for City Council Committee Action from the City Coordinator's Office

Date: February 25, 2013

To: Honorable Elizabeth Glidden, Chair, Regulatory, Energy & Environment

Committee

Subject: Resolution supporting Earth Hour 2013

Recommendation:

Approve passage of a Resolution supporting Earth Hour 2013.

Prepared by: Gayle Prest, Sustainability Director

Approved by: Paul Aasen, City Coordinator

Presenters in Committee: Gayle Prest, Sustainability Director

Background Information:

During Earth Hour (Saturday, March 23 from 8:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. central time) millions of people around the world will come together to call for action on climate change by doing something quite simple—turning off their lights for one hour. Earth Hour is a global movement uniting people to protect the planet. Towards the end of March every year, Earth Hour brings together communities from across the world celebrating a commitment to the planet by switching off lights for one designated hour. The City of Minneapolis has participated in Earth Hour since 2008.

Earth Hour encourages individuals, businesses and governments to show leadership on environmental solutions through their actions, and to use Earth Hour as a platform to showcase to the world what measures they are taking to reduce their environmental impact. Earth Hour asks everyone to take personal accountability for their impact on the planet and make changes to facilitate a sustainable lifestyle. By switching off your lights for Earth Hour you are acknowledging and celebrating your commitment to do something more for the planet that goes beyond the hour. To that end, Earth Hour does not purport to be an energy/carbon reduction exercise; it is a symbolic action.

The inaugural Earth Hour took place in Sydney, Australia in March 2007 with more than 2.2 million people participating. The World Wildlife Federation launched Earth Hour 2008 as a global initiative in which communities turned out their non-essential lights to symbolize their leadership and commitment to finding solutions for climate change.

Each year, the City also takes this time to highlight the City buildings that also participate in Audubon Minnesota's Lights Out program. Most birds migrate at night and can be drawn off course by tall, lighted structures in their flight path. Many birds are killed or injured in collisions with buildings or drop from exhaustion after circling them, reluctant to fly out of the light. Lights Out programs can dramatically reduce these collisions. Lights Out is a voluntary program where building owners, managers and tenants work together to ensure that all unnecessary lighting is turned off during spring and fall bird migration periods. In Minnesota, the Lights Out program has

been ongoing since 2007. In addition to Audubon Minnesota, it is supported by both Building Owners and Managers Associations (Minneapolis and St. Paul) and by the individual building staff.

Besides saving birds, the Lights Out program saves a considerable amount of energy, money and reduces pollution by reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Attachment 1: 2013 Earth Hour Resolution